

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Ben Kline and I am from New Haven. I also work as a paralegal at Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services of Connecticut, assisting refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants of all backgrounds in adjusting their immigration statuses to find security and prosperity in Connecticut.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I have seen undocumented clients forced to choose between food, rent, and medical care, putting their and their children's wellbeings at risk, even when they have viable but slow paths towards legalizing their immigration status.

The cut-off age of 9 for HUSKY access is arbitrary and unfair. If an older sibling or parent is unable to access healthcare, this will inevitably and negatively affect the welfare of younger children currently eligible for HUSKY, including those born in the US to mixed-status families. The pandemic has shown how broken our healthcare system is, and also how much our economy relies on front line workers - including many undocumented immigrants and their families - who cannot access the social safety net.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Ben Kline
New Haven

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Ben Kline
Paralegal

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